



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR MAJED BAMYA, FIRST COUNSELLOR, MISSION OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 136: PROGRAMME PLANNING– PROPOSED PROGRAM PLAN 2020, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(New York, 8 October 2019)

Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 136: "Programme planning– Proposed programme plan 2020".
2. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for the presentation of the proposed programme plan budget for 2020.
3. The Group of 77 and China wishes to commend the chairperson of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), Mr. Collen Kelapile, Permanent Representative of Botswana, and the Vice Chairs of the committee, for their leadership and guidance during the committee's deliberations this year. We thank Ambassador Kelapile for the presentation of the Committee's report.

Mr. Chair,

4. This is a year with new and complex tasks for our Committee to undertake, and none is as arduous as the first annual programme plan and budget in almost 45 years. However, it holds true that since the adoption in 1974 of programmed budgeting, the Group has repeatedly stated the importance of Programme Planning, and later on of the role of the CPC in enabling the General Assembly to translate mandates agreed upon by Member States into implementable programmes. The Group firmly expresses that the Plenary and all Main Committees of the General Assembly must retain their role in the initial reviewing and taking action on the recommendations of the CPC relevant to their work.
5. As staunch defenders of the prerogatives of the CPC, the Group wishes to underline the importance of its work as the main subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council for planning, programming and coordination. The CPC not only gives guidance to the Secretariat by interpreting legislative mandates but also considers and develops evaluation procedures for the improvement of programme design and the avoidance of overlap and duplication. The CPC and its hard work are at the core of the General Assembly's capacity to provide guidance and oversight in the areas just mentioned.

Mr. Chair,

6. Reflecting on the CPC report, and the description of the deliberations among its members, the Group is concerned that the decisions the General Assembly took in resolution 72/266 A have not been followed by

the Secretariat as expected. A trial period, as the one we are in, does not come without shortfalls, yet this cannot account for the apparent disregard of certain established rules and procedures. In particular, there is cause for concern regarding the format of the programmes and subprogrammes.

7. The Group believes that many of its members in the CPC voiced similar ideas during their meetings, and having consulted with them we have learned that even between delegations with opposite or differing ideas, a great deal of tentative agreements was reached. However, no agreement was achieved ultimately on the Programme Plan and the evaluations of entities submitted by OIOS.

8. This led the CPC to put the Programme Plan in the hands of the General Assembly for consideration. We note this is the first time the entirety of the Programme Plan has been submitted to the Assembly without any recommendations, and the Group expects it will also be the last. We cannot help but over emphasize the need for the appropriate sequence of the Programme plan and the programme budget. The Group is therefore gravely troubled by the timeline under which the related programme budget has been prepared by the Secretariat, analyzed by the ACABQ and then presented to us without an intergovernmentally agreed Programme Plan. This is tantamount to any national government not having a national plan and priorities on which to create a budget. The intergovernmental supervision of the budgetary process and of the programmatic guidelines that the CPC provides cannot be underestimated, much less ignored. That would compromise the very legitimacy of the mandates.

9. We acknowledge the need for efficiency and therefore are willing to show flexibility regarding the closely scheduled informal sessions on the programme plan and the budget. However, the Group stresses that these items, though closely related, are not and cannot ever be viewed as the same. It is paramount that negotiations are kept on different tracks, especially since agreements on any of the budget sections are not possible without their corresponding programmes and subprogrammes according to our current Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.

Mr. Chair,

10. We believe we have touched upon the most pressing and complex issues surrounding this agenda item. Notwithstanding, the Group during informal consultations will address other very important elements surrounding CPC's work such as the programme evaluation of the Office of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and of the regional economic commissions, as well as the United Nations system support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development. We will also continue to push for more coordination with the Joint Inspection Unit, especially since no reports from that independent, external oversight body were presented to the CPC this year.

11. In conclusion, Mr. Chair, the Group of 77 and China reaffirms its commitment in supporting and strengthening the work of the CPC. The Group also reiterates its appreciation for the work done by members of the CPC and for the support received from the tireless Secretariat during the past session. The Group is committed to working constructively with you and all delegations on this item to achieve a result that will allow our Organization to receive the guidance and structure it much needs for the next year.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR MAJED BAMYA,
FIRST COUNSELLOR, MISSION OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE TO THE UNITED
NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 135: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR 2020, AT THE
FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

(New York, 8 October 2019)

Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 135: "Proposed Programme Budget for 2020".

2. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank Mr Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for the presentation of his proposed programme budget for 2020. We also thank Mr Cihan Terzi, Chairman of the Advisory Committee, for introducing the Committee's related report.

Mr. Chair,

3. The programme budget serves as the resource base for the United Nations to fulfil its role and execute its legislated mandates. The budget document is not only a financial and accounting tool. It is an authoritative statement that should reflect the strategic vision of the Secretary-General in delivering the mandates and priorities agreed upon by Member States. The Group reiterates its request to the Secretariat and to all Member States to strictly abide by the consistent decisions of the General Assembly that no changes to the established budget methodology, procedures and practices or to the financial regulations should be implemented without prior review and approval by the General Assembly.

4. For the Group, the proposed programme budget is one of the most important agenda items under consideration during this main session. We believe that sufficient time must be provided for informal consultations. We request that adequate time in the Programme of Work be allocated for this specific agenda item.

Mr. Chair,

5. On the preparation of the programme budget, the Group notes that this is the first year that we have moved to an annual budget period on a trial basis. We acknowledge that every transition is accompanied by challenges, and we recognise the Secretariat's efforts to present a more accessible budget proposal. However, the Group regrets the lack of adherence to key established budgetary procedures and practices. In particular, the sequential nature of the review processes conducted by the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee was not preserved, contrary to paragraph 12 of resolution 72/266 A.

6. This has impacted not only the timeliness of the review processes, but also the accuracy of related documentation. As the proposed resource requirements are based on a programme plan that has not yet been approved by the General Assembly, it also undermines the link between resource proposals and the mandated activities of the Organisation. The Group also notes the various concerns highlighted by the Advisory Committee on the level of details in the new budget proposal format, and will engage in constructive discussions on this issue during the informal sessions.

Mr. Chair,

7. On the proposed programme budget itself, the Group notes the lack of clarity and justification for “efficiency measures” and “productivity gains”. The Group agrees with the Advisory Committee that further improvements are needed to better explain and enhance the clarity of resource changes presented in future budget proposals with regard to these areas.

Mr. Chair,

8. The United Nations adopted the Agenda for Sustainable Development four years ago. We are now little more than a decade away from our target date of 2030. International peace and security and development are two sides of the same coin. The ground conditions for peace and stability will not be laid if the development agenda is not realised.

9. In this regard, the Group reiterates its call for the strengthening of the development pillar. We are therefore concerned that the budget proposal contains cuts to bodies that are integral to the development pillar, such as DESA, UNCTAD, and the Regional Commissions including ECA, ESCAP, ECLAC, and ESCWA. The Group will seek detailed explanations about the proposed cuts during the informal consultations.

Mr. Chair,

10. The Group notes with concern the growing imbalance between assessed and voluntary contributions. The budget proposal contains a net increase of \$78.2 million in extrabudgetary resources as compared with estimates for 2019, while assessed contributions continue to be reduced. This means that even as legislative bodies approve mandates and set priorities, these priorities can be skewed towards specific areas that receive more voluntary funding. The Group firmly rejects any such manipulation of the Organisation's delivery of mandates. The Group reiterates its long-standing position that adequate resources must be provided for the Organisation to fulfil its mandates. In the meanwhile, the Group notes that the total extrabudgetary budgetary resources grew from \$9.27 billion in 2014 to \$12.4 billion in 2020, representing an increase of 34 per cent. The Group reiterates that all extrabudgetary posts must be administered and managed with the same rigor as regular budget posts and that extrabudgetary resources shall be used in consistency with the policies, aims and activities of the Organisation.

Mr. Chair,

11. The Group is committed to working constructively with you and all delegations on this item. We encourage all delegations to engage in budget deliberations with a spirit of flexibility and responsibility, in order to reach an agreement that is in the best interests of the Organisation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.